The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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The Way of Hope.

'Tis passing, soon 'twill be
For ever gone,
This day of love and life,
Time strideth on.
How awful then the thought
Each moment brings.
All we have done this day
"For ever" sings.

Each day of lovely light,
Tho' ne'er so dear,
Dies as the low'ring night
Darkly draws near:
Each day of wrath and sin
Stands writ for aye,
Nor tears, nor prayers bring back
Time passed away.

Alone with fearsome crime,
In grim despair,
How may the penitent
Foul deeds make fair!
Sternly and solemnly
Stands ruthless Fate,
Barring the way of Hope
"Too late! Too late!".

O! God of tenderness,
Father of love;
Come to the bruiséd heart,
Come from above.
Lead Thou thine erring child
Back to the way,
"Forward" Hope's watchword rings,
There shines the day.

N. A.

The Christian Message of Liberty.

BY REV. W. H. DRUMMOND, B.A.

A short time ago I made a pilgrimage to the abbey church of Moissac, in the south-west of France. It is a church known to fame by reason of its glorious cloister and the quaint and grotesque sculptures of its southern portal. It was these that I had gone to see, but my eye was at once caught by something strangely unmediæval, and, at first sight, little in keeping with the memories and associations which came thronging into the mind from the past. Across the most conspicuous side of the church, in staring black letters, there had been written the three great watchwords of the Revolution: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." My first thought was that here was another evidence of the curbing of the power of the Church by the civil arm, of the growth of the secular and anti-clerical spirit which is one of the most significant social facts in the life of modern France. The Revolution came full of menace to most things old and established, and the Church, in company with the Crown and the aristocracy, had to bow its head to the storm; but surely the insolence of victory had gone too far in thus making the home of old-world piety proclaim its own defeat. That was my first thought, and it may not have been so far from the truth. But it was quickly succeeded by another. Why, I asked myself, should there be any feeling of unfitness in seeing these words upon the walls of a building dedicated to the cause of Christ's kingdom. If they seem to savour too much of the secular world and the violence of human passions, is it not because the Church has been

too ready to support human privilege, and has all too seldom risen to its high calling as the emancipator of men. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," they were the watchwords of the Revolution, but in a deeper sense they are the watchwords of the Christian Church. To struggle for a liberty, which shall never sink into licence, for ourselves and for all men; to realise the equality of all souls before God, sharers in one spiritual nature and the same Divine love; to draw closer the bonds of fraternity through the sharing of material blessings, and, still more, in the partnership of common purposes and a common love of truth and justice—this is all involved in any true following of Jesus Christ, in any intelligent acceptance of his teaching about God and man.

We do not hear much about liberty in the teaching of Christ himself, but we are conscious of its spirit in every word and act; and when men like St. Paul came to think about it afterwards, and to ask themselves the secret of his strange and irresistible influence, they found it above all in the fact that he had been divinely set apart for the work of a Liberator, to open the blind eyes, to set at liberty them that were bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He stooped over the sick and tormented bodies of men, and he breathed into their hearts the faith they needed to arise and walk, or the sublimer courage which accepts suffering as the discipline of God's holy love. He saw them engrossed in the lower aims of the world, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and he awoke the longing for larger interests and diviner joys. He found them in bondage to legal views of worship and duty, religion sinking into ritual, and mercy held of less account than sacrifice, and he led them forth into the promised land, where they could worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Liberty is first of all escape from what cramps and thwarts and disables. It is the striking off of fetters, the breaking down of boundaries. Men value it not because it is in itself a positive and final good, but because it makes possible something better than the past has known, some higher reach of thought, some richer expression of goodness, some nobler form of character. Every real growth of liberty is followed by a development of vital energy over a wider area, among a larger number of men. It has been so in the history of nations and political societies. The repeal of oppressive laws, the extension of the franchise, the development of social organisation,—just in so far as these things represent a positive advance of liberty, they have been followed by the birth of larger social energy. The passing away of cramping and harmful restraint has been simply the prelude to a higher life for thought and art and conduct. This has never been more signally true than in the case of Christianity. It made it possible for men to think deeper, to attempt more, to follow higher hopes, to cherish new dreams of beauty, to explore fresh fields of heroism and philanthrophy. It taught them to put a great price on their liberty, because it was freedom to live nearer to God, to be something better, and to do something nobler.

Some people are fond of dwelling upon the dangers of liberty. Many acute writers have maintained that it is of doubtful benefit to the masses of men; and not without some show of reason. Liberty has so often sunk into license. Men have gone forth from the house of bondage without any true vision of the land of promise. They have wandered aimlessly in the wilderness, content to please themselves, without any of the restraining influences of law and social habit. When the fetters dropped from their hands, and the whip of the task-master ceased to sound in their ears, they fancied that the days of compulsory obedience were gone for ever. But in reality all true liberty is only the beginning of a higher obedience. The irksomeness of bondage springs not at all from the fact that we are forced to obey. It is the knowledge that he is bowing down before a false authority, which has no rightful claim upon him, or that his life is being dwarfed and narrowed by the letter of a dead precept instead of moulded by the will of a living and present Lord, which makes the true man struggle for liberty. He does not desire to emancipate himself from all control, to please himself and do what is right in his own eyes, —that would be to sink into a baser form of servitude,—but simply to rid himself of false restraints, that he may place his life gladly and without reserve under the control of what is holy and true and just.

One or two familiar illustrations will, per-

haps, make my meaning clearer. Suppose, for instance, the father of a large family finds himself obliged to go on a long journey, which cuts him off from any direct control over the conduct and habits of his children. Before his departure he gives strict instructions to his subordinates, and draws up a series of rules for the good ordering of his household. For a time all goes well, but with his lengthened absence unforeseen difficulties occur. The growing boys and girls become conscious of new gifts and desires. Life for them is becoming richer in varied good and ill. But obedience still means a careful following of their father's commands, which more and more seem to check and thwart, instead of helping them to live their best life. They almost despise themselves for doubting his wisdom, but deep down in their hearts is a feeling which they cannot suppress, in which anger against their bondage and a holy love of liberty are strangely mingled. How different it is when the father returns! He sees at once how irksome some of his rules have become; how others, which he meant for guidance, have been petrified into hard and oppressive laws; how many of the noblest qualities of his children have no room to grow. He resolves that it shall be so no longer. They must learn to interpret his will not according to the letter, but in the spirit; to find strength and support in his living and present sympathy; to act out of a deep respect for the divine voice in their own souls. Slowly they learn the great lesson. Day by day the old feeling of tiresome restraint drops away. The common life of the home loses the dreary monotony of its formal goodness, and begins to clothe itself in all the fresh charm and ordered changefulness of liberty. But with this liberty there has come no slackening of the sense of duty, no contempt for the voice of rightful authority. Obedience has passed up to a higher level, but at the same time it has become stricter, more personal and exacting in its claims.

Or let us take another illustration. We often speak of a man becoming his own master. After the long discipline of home and school, and the subordinate position at business, he is at last going to take the helm into his own hands and steer his own course. We congratulate him on his promotion; and the men he leaves behind think, perhaps, a little enviously of him, as of one who has exchanged the dreary days of obedience for those of untrammelled freedom. It is a fine thing to see the strong man thus putting forth his strength, to watch him cutting his straight path through the rough waters of the world, master, as it seems, of his own fortunes and destiny. But how often we are deceived by things which only seem! Is any man in this broad earth his own master? and if he fancies that he is, and tries to live in that belief, is he not certain to make shipwreck of himself and his fortunes? The lad going forth from the narrow circle of home into the life of a large school is claiming his liberty, and there may be pride and exhilaration in the feeling of it. But how terrible is his mistake, and how soon he will find it out to his cost, if he thinks he is going out into a world where less strict obedience will be required of him. When he stands on the threshold of active life he is again claiming a larger liberty. If all his working hours are carefully mapped out for him, he has a less restrained choice as to his pleasures, the occupations of his spare time, the spending of his money. But if he fancies that in these matters he is free to do as he likes, and that at last he has discovered a sphere in which no one can claim his obedience, how soon his mistake declares itself in enfeebled character or physical weakness, it may be in the growth of some habit, which, little by little, saps the finer qualities of his manhood, or in that terrible craving for excitement and weariness of the good and beautiful things of the world, which are part of the divine curse upon disobedience. And if he is among the few successful ones, who come to the front in the world of commerce, or thought, or public affairs, he again enters upon a wider liberty. For a short time he may be dazzled with the thought that at last he is free to shape his own course. Does he not make the laws which other men must obey? Does he not think the thoughts, or paint the pictures, or write the books, which other men can only admire? Does he not, by his own skill and shrewdness, the sheer force of his own brain, build up the industry to which hundreds of other men look for a livelihood, and upon which the prosperity of an empire in part depends? Yes; but if he does any of these things worthily it is through strict and unswerving obedience to

laws, which he has not made and cannot alter, to a Power, which can command him, but which he can never control. If he forgets this, there is nothing can save him from failure; and of all failures which bring to us "the sense of tears in mortal things," is there any sadder than that of greatness brought to the dust through its own disobedience?

We talk much of liberty to-day. Amid all our noble pride in it, and not a little vain boastfulness about it, let us not forget that in God's world we can only be free to be something better, and to do something nobler, to obey higher laws, and to embrace wider duties.

We see, then, why and in what sense there is a divine compulsion laid upon us as Christians to struggle for liberty for all men; why the Christian Church should be the home of liberty, in which the character is tempered to use it well and its truest lessons are learned. Our Lord came to proclaim the love of God, and to teach men how to love God; to make the love of God real, vivid, personal in the world, and to convince men that they can serve God by drawing this love into their lives, and giving it back in obedience and praise. Therefore, we oppose, in his name, everything which narrows and degrades human lives. We would undo every yoke which keeps men under a false mastery. We would destroy the darkness of ignorance and greed and cruelty, in which men only learn to fear. And the end and aim of all this struggle for liberty is that we may rescue them for a higher obedience. We pray for an ever larger freedom for ourselves and our brothers, not that we may please ourselves and become masters of our own destiny, but that we may be able to rise to a stricter holiness and rejoice more fervently in the service of God. The prayer and the struggle will alike be in vain, if we allow ourselves to forget, that the privileges of Christian liberty can never be separated from the sovereignty of Christian obedience.

It is often extremely difficult in the mixed things of this world to act truly and kindly, too; but therein lies one of the great trials of a man, that his sincerity should have kindness in it, and his kindness truth.

Ruskin's "Seven Lamps of Architecture," considered as Parables.

VII.—The Lamp of Obedience.

I do not propose to show how Ruskin illustrates obedience, the crowning virtue of manhood, in the realm of architecture. The particular line he takes has been hotly disputed, *i.e.*, that what we want for a national architecture is not, as is often declared, a *new* school, which our teachers tell us is impossible, but the authoritative choice of *one* school to which everything shall conform, from the cottage to the palace, from the shop to the Church. That one school may be selected from half-a-dozen of the existing schools, but being once chosen, let it be by every one obeyed. Let us not be seeking after something new and fantastic in the names of Liberty and Progress. Let us rather take the well-proven and yield ourselves to its laws and restraints, assured that within the limitations imposed there will be plenty of scope for individual genius to make its mark and show its originality. Much of the modern craving for originality is, in Ruskin's view, mere folly and rottenness. A great poet does not ask for a new language, or for any new rhythms in which to sing. He finds abundant scope within the limits of and in obedience to the laws of language and rhythm he finds to his hand. The painter does not ask for a new world of colours—colours never seen before in in heaven or earth to express his vision of beauty. Only in obedience to the facts of colour as they exist, only in obedience to the laws of painting which experience has verified, can he hope for any success. Originality must display itself not in defying the limits and restraints of law, but in obedience and service to laws beyond whose flaming barriers is only the odd, the eccentric, the wilful, and the licentious.

Here, as in other places, Ruskin asks the question, "What is Liberty?" Is it freedom to do as one pleases? Is it release from restraint? Is it defiance of authority? Here, as in other places, Ruskin sets liberty and obedience over against each other in contrast and opposition. Of course, all depends on what we mean by liberty. If we mean doing as we please; if we conceive of liberty as freedom from law, then liberty is a most treacherous phantom.

"Most treacherous indeed of all phantoms; for the feeblest ray of reason might surely show us, that not only its attainment but its being, was impossible. There is no such thing in the universe. There never can be. The stars have it not; the earth has it not; the sea has it not, and we men have the mockery and semblance of it only for our heaviest punishment."

If there be one principle more widely than another confirmed by every utterance of nature, or more sternly than another imprinted on every atom of the visible creation, that principle is not Liberty but Law.

But if one replies, "By Liberty I mean the *Law* of Liberty," then Ruskin retorts—"Why not be careful to say so?"

"Then why use the single and misunderstood word? If by liberty you mean chastisement of the passions, discipline of the intellect, subjection of the will; if you mean the fear of inflicting, the shame of committing, a wrong; if you mean respect for all who are in authority, and consideration for all who are in dependence; veneration for the good, mercy to the evil, sympathy with the weak; if you mean watchfulness over all thoughts, temperance in all pleasures, and perseverance in all toils; if you mean, in a word, that service which is defined in the liturgy of the English Church to be perfect Freedom, why do you name this by the same word by which the luxurious mean license, and the reckless mean change; by which the rogue means rapine, and the fool equality; by which the proud mean anarchy, and the malignant mean violence? Call it by any name rather than this, but its best and truest is Obedience. Obedience is, indeed, founded on a kind of freedom, else it would become mere subjugation, but that freedom is only granted that obedience may be more perfect; and thus, while a measure of license is necessary to exhibit the individual energies of things, the fairness and pleasantness and perfection of them all consist in their Restraint. Compare a river that has burst its banks with one that is bound by them, and the clouds that are scattered over the face of the whole heaven with those that are marshalled into ranks and orders by its winds."

How free seem the hands of the pianist on the key-board of his instrument, how easy, rapid, and powerful their movement. The eye can scarcely follow their swift flight and innumerable turnings. Yet there is not a single movement of those free flying hands but is under the restraint of rule and law, a lifetime of discipline has been inflicted on those hands to give them that facility; every motion of those pliant fingers bear witness to unwearied toil through many previous years. In a sonata of Beethoven there are tens of thousand notes to be struck, everyone in a measured manner and in obedience to rigid law. The result is the sweetest music, free, delightful, with no appearance of strain or effort; but that result is due to severe discipline, watchful self-control, carefully trained skill acquired by unquestioning obedience to the conditions imposed.

Or take an illustration given by Ruskin in his "Queen of the Air." He quotes Giotto's saying, "You may judge my masterhood of craft by seeing that I can draw a circle unerringly." Now what is it to draw a perfect circle with a single line, that is without once removing the pencil from the paper? You want for that men say a "free hand." Do you? You cannot do it if your hand trembles, nor if it hesitates, nor if it is unmanageable, nor if it is in the common sense of the word "free." So far from being "free," it must be under a control as absolute and accurate as if it were fastened to an inflexible bar of steel. And yet it must work under this necessary control with perfect untrammelled serenity of ease. If a line is right it is not free but an intensely continent, restrained and considered line, and the action of the hand in laying it is just as decisive and controlled as the hand of a first-rate surgeon in a critical incision.

One other illustration from the "Queen of the Air," and this time a wholly humorous one.

"I believe we can nowhere find a better type of a perfectly free creature than in the common house-fly. Nor free only, but brave; and irreverent to a degree which I think no human Republican could by any philosophy exalt himself to. There is no courtesy in him; he does not care whether it is king or clown whom he teases; and in every step of his swift mechanical march, and in every pause of his resolute observation, there is one and the same expression of perfect egotism, perfect independence and self-confidence, and conviction of the world's having been made for flies. Strike at him with your hand; and to him the mechanical fact and external aspect of the matter is, what to you it would be if an acre of red clay, ten feet thick, tore itself up from the ground in one massive field, hovered over you in the air for a second, and came crashing down with an aim. This is the external aspect of it; the inner aspect, to his (fly's) mind, is of a quite natural and unimportant occurrence—one of the momentary conditions of his active life. He slips out of the way of your hand, and alights on the back of it. You cannot terrify him, nor govern him, nor persuade him, nor convince him. He has his own positive opinion on all matters; not an unwise one, usually for his own ends; and will ask no advice of yours. He has no work to do—no tyrannical instinct to obey. The mole has his digging; the bee her gathering and building; the spider her cunning net-work; the ant her treasury and accounts. All these are comparatively

slaves, or people of vulgar business. But your fly, free in the air, free in the chamber—a black incarnation of caprice—wandering, investigating, flitting, flirting, feasting at his will, with rich variety of choice in feast, from the heaped sweets in the grocer's window to those of the butcher's back-yard, and from the galled place on your cab-horse's back to the brown spot in the road, from which, as the hoof disturbs him, he rises with angry republican buzz—what freedom is like his? For captivity, again, perhaps your poor watch-dog is as sorrowful a type as you will easily find. Mine certainly is. The day is lovely, but I must write this, and cannot go out to him. He is chained in the yard, because I do not like dogs in rooms, and the gardener does not like dogs in gardens. He has no books—nothing but his own weary thoughts for company, and a group of those free flies, whom he snaps at, with sudden ill success. Such dim hope as he may have that I may yet take him out with me will be, hour by hour, wearily disappointed; or, worse, darkened at once into a leaden despair by an authoritative "No,"—too well understood. His fidelity only seals his fate. If he would not watch for me, he would be sent away, and go hunting with some happier master; but he watches, and is wise and faithful, and miserable, and his high animal intellect only gives him the wistful powers of wonder, and sorrow, and desire, and affection, which embitter his captivity. Yet of the two, would we rather be watch-dog or fly?"

Service, duty, self-restraint, discipline, in one word obedience, is what we need to adorn life with power and dignity. Our liberty is only good and wise within the limitations of unquestioned law. We are not even free to think as we please, we are bound to think in accordance with the facts. Facts are stern, rigid and unyielding, and they do not permit thought to wander beyond their barriers. Our liberty is "a law of liberty." And yet the law that has not a Lawgiver could hardly restrain us. Law is an abstraction, cold, rigid, unknowing, uncaring. Human life needs something more than law—it needs a God whom it knows to be just, loving, generous, true, and wise; a God who will not command obedience as an ironclad commands a fishing boat to heave to, but whose glorious goodness wins it, so that obedience is changed into the warm, palpitating, vital thing we call Loyalty. The noblest word in the catalogue of virtue is loyalty as the noblest word in Religion is love. And there is no loyalty without love, and no love without loyalty. Now loyalty and love are given only to persons. Therein lies a profound thought for consideration.

A great writer has told us that the two things men's lives most want as they grow older are simplicity and independence. By independence he means unity,—the unity of some one supreme, absorbing loyalty; the independence of one who is obedient to a supreme affection. We want unity. We become broken, scattered, dissipated among a thousand interests until life is no longer a whole ruled by a great idea and purpose. We want independence, liberty as we say. For as we travel on from youth into the work, cares and burdens of manhood, we become fettered by a thousand gradually accumulated obligations, till without our ever having consciously given ourselves away, we grow aware that we are no longer our own, and cannot act with any freedom. We are hemmed in by all sorts of relationships, we are fettered by innumerable petty authorities. Now the only restoration of unity and independence must come, not by cutting off interests and relationships, nor by disowning obligations with their authority, but by enveloping all minor interests in one supreme interest, and by subordinating all the lesser obligations to one commanding authority. The child's life has both this unity and independence. We can think of it as a whole. He is not disturbed by a crowd of small competing obligations and authorities. Why? Because his life is held firmly and warmly within another's life. With him one interest is supreme—his mother's love; one obligation is supreme,—his father's will. Love and Loyalty are the sacred things in his life. He wanders not from their orbits. The interests and relationships of home are above all. They give his life unity; they dower him with perfect freedom, for where is there any freedom more sweet and complete than that of a true-hearted child in a wisely-ordered home.

You are conscious that your life has no unity and no independence. How shall you win them back? There is only one way—you must be a child again. To be converted and become as little children is your necessity. Not by cutting down the interests of your life, and making it meagre, will you find unity. That was the monkish way, and it failed pitiably. Not by making life restive and rebellious will you find independence; but if ever, to-day or any other golden day, you can take your life in your hand and lay it before God, and say, "Father, do with me as thou wilt; whatsoever thou sayest unto me I will obey;" then you will know the unity of having one supreme commanding

interest, and the independence which comes by loyalty to one only King of heart and life. Then your interests may be as rich, varied, and numerous as possible; you may accumulate the obligations which hem you in, but held in the grip of that great loyalty, the multiplicity of life shall fill out, not destroy, its wholeness, and you shall be men's servant without being their slave. Such a life, having in it that one mighty obedience which is only another name for loyalty, will be like some great cathedral, adorned within and without by a countless multitude of traceries, figures, arcades, pillars, delicate carvings of foliage and birds, and cherubs' faces and angels' wings, yet all wrought into one harmonious temple by the glorious conception of some great artist soul. The one idea dominates the whole, and subordinates the multitudinous parts and details to itself.

For "Ye are God's building," and how soon for you and for me may all architecture be vain, except that which is not made with hands! These swiftly passing years are taking from us our time, opportunities, and strength. What progress have we made in building the temple of the soul, whose foundations are truth and righteousness, whose walls are salvation, whose gates are praise, whose altar is a lowly heart, whose stones are just and loving deeds, whose organ music is the many-voiced harmony of all the great things of faith, hope, and love, whose strength is in obedience, and whose top-stone the angels must bring? You are building a soul-house for eternity. Think! It may be a temple of marvellous beauty, noble in design, exquisite in all its parts; or it may be a mud hut, a hovel, with no beauty, a place where the swine herd and eat their husks. Build ye well and wisely! Build ye strong and stoutly! Build on foundations deep as the truth of God, with towers that stand four-square in righteousness to all the winds that blow, welded together from pavement to spire by the strong cement of an obedience which holds every stone in its place against all the shocks of doom!

JOSEPH WOOD.

It is safer to be humble with one talent than proud with ten; yea, better to be a humble woman than a proud angel.

The Philosophy of Smoking.

[BY AN EXPERT.]

It was Robert Louis Stevenson who defined smoking as a means of being happy without either thought or work. We go further and define it as a means of being happy without anything but itself. Perish not only thought and work, but love, beauty, Science, Art, history and the daily press, but leave us the Pipe and we shall be content. Let the whole created universe vanish into smoke, and let that smoke be of tobacco (the right brand only), and let the human soul be immersed in the midst and provided with a stem through which to inhale the circumambient incense, and all will still be well.

There can be no doubt that with a large number of the best educated section of the human race the quest for the *summum bonum* is ended. They have reached it in tobacco smoke. The present writer has been struck by the enormous number of persons for whom the meaning of life, both literally and symbolically, ends in this. All the occupations, all the interests of life are tributary to smoke. No exercise of mind, no intercourse of man with man, no contemplation of the beauties of Nature has the least attraction for them unless it be crowned with the prospect of tobacco. Invite me to a country house to meet the most interesting man on earth, add that between whiles I may enjoy the society of charming and beautiful ladies, call up visions of the splendid scenery of your neighbourhood, put your stable at my disposal, remind me of your famous collections of Great Masters and Old Port—I am entranced—I leap for joy at the prospect—when, what is this? My eye falls on a hideous postcript—"I am sorry to say we do not like smoking, but perhaps you won't mind for a day or two." Won't mind! As if at the touch of some fell magician's wand, a blight descends and the pleasing vision is shrouded in fog and filthy air. Won't mind! I would rather spend the one cherished holiday of the year watching a cabbage grow in my own back yard, *with a pipe*, than walk the fields of Paradise without it. For me no intellectual treats exist, no great emotions are possible, no charm of human intercourse is conceivable, except as condiments to flavour my nicotine. Your fine

country house, your distinguished company, your beautiful views, are to me but as the dull bass of an orchestra, but promise me "the big cigar of Havana" and it is as though above the growlings of your big fiddle I heard the ringing heavenly notes of Patti's voice. Give me this, and the dullest fool on earth becomes a jolly fellow; give it not, and the greatest wit is a bore, the greatest beauty a painted doll So I take unto me words and my tongue becomes the pen of a ready writer:—"I am extremely sorry that the dangerous illness of a beloved great-aunt makes it, etc., etc."

The philosophy of smoking begins in the recognition of this fact:—that what constitute the great interests of life for a non-smoker, are, for the smoker, not ends in themselves but means to those ends, — mere opportunities, incitements, excuses for the use of tobacco. For instance, a non-smoker would write this article in order that he might impress the readers of the *Seed Sower* with the importance of his views; I write it, on the contrary, in order that I may enjoy my pipe during the process. Were I not thus employed, my afternoon would have been occupied with an important business engagement, during which smoking would have been impossible. So it is in the realms of higher art, of purer philosophy, of more momentous action. Smoking generates a mood of sublime indifference, not only to the reception the world meets out to ones work, but also to the character of the work itself. It matters not what I am at so long as I can smoke over it. The interests of life become graduated on a new and, it will be admitted, a more philosophic scale, and the springs of action re-arrange themselves in a new order of moral worth. The best moments of one's life, and the worthiest, are those into which tobacco enters with the greatest sense of fitness. Nothing that takes place in a high wind, for instance, can have supreme worth or beauty; because in a high wind no man can smoke with satisfaction. No smoker can possibly be at his best in a high wind; and though a philosophic mind might draw several alarming inferences from this Law, as, for instance, the likely decay of seamanship in the British navy, we may be quite at our ease when we remember how many important aspects of modern life have to be fulfilled within closed doors.

What will be the exact results of this in the history of a generation which, because it smokes, can be happy without thought, work, or anything else, and which finds its deepest and most powerful want satisfied in a pipe, what changes will take place in the degree of its mental and bodily energies and the objects to which these energies are devoted, how the level of its performance will compare with that of non-smoking ages—these questions lie beyond the limits of this article. But we hope we have said enough in the preceding paragraphs to bring assurance to the minds of any unfortunate non-smoker, who fears that the total result will be bad. Whether or no we take too optimistic a view of its character, there can be no question as to its magnitude. It is equally clear that smoking will leave a deep impression on all the activities of our age. In view of the powerful effects of tobacco on the mind, it is certain that a smoking age will differ profoundly from a non-smoking in the spirit of its Laws, Art, Literature, Science, Philosophy, and Religion. How much of Carlyle's work would never have been done if that sage had been a non-smoker! That many of his most trenchant sayings are the offsprings of dyspepsia is one of the few demonstrable verities of modern history; that his dyspepsia was caused by the excessive use of tobacco is also something more than a tenable theory. Had Mr Gladstone, as an undergraduate, instead of labouring to take a "double first," devoted part of the time so spent, after the more enlightened fashion of modern Oxford, to learning to smoke, who can say that the Irish Church would ever have been disestablished? We might accumulate a thouaand such considerations, and, who that notes them, will doubt that Tobacco is entitled to rank with Science and Realism and Scepticism as one of the chief agencies that mould the spirit of the age? We venture to say that Tobacco has played a greater part in determining the course of modern civilisation than many a portentious "ism" on which whole volumes have been written. The History of Europe, as moulded by Tobacco, is a subject still waiting to be illumined by the brilliance of genius. Can it be that the subtle intellect of Germany has not yet seen the importance of developing what may be called The Historico-nicotinical View of the Universe (*Die Historisch-nicotinische Weltanschauung*)?

In regard to the precise form in which this influence comes about, it has been said that smoking complicates life. It does this *by the introduction of a new mood.* Everyone knows that the complexity as well as the inconsistency of life is traceable to the variety of its moods. That resolutions are not kept, that undertakings are not carried out, that promises are not fulfilled, is due to the fact that men are not in the same mood when these engagements have to be observed as they were when they were first made. The greater the range of our moods the greater is the scope for this complexity, and each additional mood is therefore a new source of difficulty. This consideration is the more important when we remember that the new mood to which men are lifted by smoking is of a highly special as well as of a very enterprising character, sanguine, equable, complacent, inclined to please others; whereas the succeeding mood, when the re-action of the stimulus has begun, is apt to be the very reverse — irritable, dull-witted, dissatisfied, disinclined to enterprise. It might be suspected, therefore, that the life of a smoker would show marked discontinuity of purpose, that his productions would be unequal in the value of their different parts, and that his general moral attitude would be one of oscillation between extremes. And on the large scale we should expect to find the spirit of a smoking age attempting many things beyond its strength, propounding theories which it was not willing to practice, nourishing ideals both of Art and of Life which it was not able to realise, introducing measures which have subsequently to be dropped. Who shall say that the awful contrast between the splendid social ideals of this age and its anything but splendid social conditions is not in part due to the fact that men usually conceive their ideals while they have their pipes in their mouths, but have to carry out those ideals in places where smoking is not allowed? Who shall say that the rapid fate of the recent Education Bill was not also due to the fact that it was concocted by smokers in that genial mood produced by big cigars in which one is apt to forget the grim realities of this universe.

Now, speaking as we do on behalf of the smoking community, it must be admitted that tobacco does, indeed, complicate life by the introduction of another mood. But this evil admits of a very simple remedy. It is that the smoker should smoke always. His mood will then be always one, and a beautiful consistency will enter his life. He will thus annihilate that duality of nature which divides us into the man and the lawyer, the man and the doctor, the man and the parson, as the case may be. Both the man and the Profession will be merged into the Higher Unity of the Smoker. No doubt such a course will involve the ruin of his health. And that is just the worst of it from the smoker's point of view.

Holiday Notes.

(FROM SOME GERMAN TOWNS.)

II.

Leaving Heidelberg early in the morning, we passed on to Rothenburg, our next resting-place. Visitors usually reach the town by a single line of rail, via Steinach, from which place the train crawls the nine miles so slowly that you realise at once you have left the busy and bustling age behind, and become prepared to be transported into an old-world town! From 19th century thoughts and scenes, we were thus carried back into the 13th century, as we entered the quaint old city of Rothenburg, in Bavaria, which stands on a hill, overlooking the river Tauber, and is remarkable as having retained intact the walls with which it is entirely surrounded, and the picturesque towers, forming its defence in the middle ages. Rothenburg (or the Red City) is spoken of as a town so early as 942, and from 1274 to 1803 it was a free city of the empire. Having joined the Protestant party, it suffered frightfully during the Thirty Years' War, and was besieged and taken by Tilly, the victorious and fanatical general of the Catholic side, who gave orders to plunder and loot, and in 1631 condemned the Senate to death, from which they were delivered by Nusch, the ex-Bürgermeister. His self-sacrificing act is celebrated every Whitsuntide by a Festival-play, given in the old Rath-haus (Town Hall), which attracts thousands of people. During the day, a motley crew, representing Tilly and his army, assemble in the Spital-Hof (Hospital Court) and walk in solemn procession through the town to the place where the real

Tilly encamped 250 years ago ; and the gateways and towers are manned by halberdiers and watchmen in the uniform of the period. The greatest prosperity of Rothenburg, however, was in the 13th and 14th centuries, when the famous Bürgermeister Töppler, a man of noble family, fine presence, and commanding talents, by his energy, wisdom, and prudence, brought the town to the highest pitch of power it ever enjoyed before or since. This great man was betrayed and falsely accused by jealous senators, and left to die in the dungeons beneath the Rath-haus.

In this fine old hall, and in the two principal churches, are treasures in the way of woodcarving, stone-work, and painted altar pieces, by the celebrated Würzburg sculptor Riemen-Schneider and the painter Wohlgemuth (the master of Albrecht Dürer). Although one or two other German towns may possess finer specimens of such work, the speciality and charm of Rothenburg lies in the fact that few so-called "improvements" have been made, no modern buildings or factories have been erected outside or close to the walls, and no new town has sprung up, so that it remains as it was in the middle ages ! The government of Rothenburg is curious, for, though belonging to the Bavarian monarchy, it is virtually autonomous as the Channel Islands. The absence of soldiers, too, in a German town is very noticeable !

A journey of a few hours brought us to Nuremberg, where a day was devoted to a general ramble round the town and walls, and visiting the beautiful old Gothic churches of St. Lorenz and St. Sebaldus, both of which contain most exquisite works of art. Fancy Adam Krafft (the celebrated sculptor, who lived early in the 16th century) and his two assistants working for seven years at the wondrous Tabernacle of white stone in St. Lorenz Church, and Peter Vischer producing that most beautiful bronze monument to St. Sebaldus, which is considered his masterpiece, and was completed, with the aid of his five sons, in 1519, after 13 years' labour !

The Germanic National Museum, established in a suppressed Carthusian monastery, contains treasures innumerable from pre-historic down to modern times, including amongst the latter a large collection of ornamental and useful articles in iron, for which Nuremberg has always been so justly famed. A quaint and curious one-storey tavern was pointed out to us, which in olden times was frequented by the "Meister-singer" and other Nuremberg celebrities. It is built on to the wall of the little St. Moritz Church, and looks like a limpet clinging to its side ! Two fine statues of Hans Sachs (the poet) and Albrecht Dürer are well worth seeing, as also the house of the latter, which has now been acquired by the town, and is full of beautiful furniture and oak carvings, pottery, and iron work.

A short time spent in Bamberg and Würzburg gave us some idea of the fine old buildings in these venerable cities—the strongholds of the powerful Prince Bishops in the middle ages. Bamberg Cathedral, with its four towers and double choir, is one of the grandest Romanesque churches in Germany, and the tomb of its founder Henry II. and his queen Kunigunde (both of whom were canonised) is an imposing monument in the centre of the nave.

In the palace at Wurzburg are some magnificent frescoes by Tiepolo, of Venice, and tapestries given by Louis XIV., as splendid as those in Malta. The Cathedral is not particularly interesting, but there are some fine brasses with low reliefs. Several other churches are well worth seeing, and in the Neumünster Church is the neglected tomb of Walter-von-der-Vogelweid, one of the earliest German poets. The famous old University is being replaced by a new and larger building, which will soon be completed.

From Würzburg we passed on to Bayreuth, the goal of our journey. "Once a year the sleepy old Franconian town wakes up and dons its holiday garb" to receive the thousands of enthusiasts of all nationalities who make a pilgrimage to this "musical Mecca," drawn there by the performance of the wondrous music-dramas of the great poet-composer Richard Wagner. The theatre specially designed for the production of the "Ring des Nibelungen" twenty years ago by Wagner and his friends, and erected partly by the generosity of Ludwig II., the late King of Bavaria, stands alone on a hill, about a mile from the town, and with a forest of pine trees forming a background.

As the performances did not take place until the afternoon, we had time in the morning to see Wagner's house called "Wahnfried," where his

widow still lives; also his tomb, which is in the garden behind the house. We also drove to the cemetery, not far from the town, and were deeply interested in seeing the graves of Liszt and Jean Paul Richter, the tomb of the latter being only marked by an immense granite boulder, in the centre of which is a bronze plate, with an inscription. The great work we had come to hear is divided into four parts, given on successive days, "Rheingold" being the introduction, and foreshadowing the events which follow in the "Walküre," "Siegfried," and "Götterdämmerung." The cycle we heard was the last of the five given this year, all of which were carefully superintended by Frau Wagner, who still watches over the production of the works of her gifted husband, in which she is so ably seconded, both by her son Siegfried, and by Dr. Hans Richter, the latter having conducted when these works were first given in 1876 at Bayreuth, under the composer's guidance, since which date, until this year, they have not been repeated.

On the first day, the performance began at five, and on the other days at four, and generally concluded about ten o'clock. Between the acts there was an interval of three-quarters of an hour, so that one did not feel nearly so tired as after an evening in a London theatre, especially as the custom was to take coffee or supper during these intervals; and, when the weather was warm enough, it was very delightful to stroll up into the woods. For an hour before the commencement, a continuous stream of carriages and pedestrians is seen winding its way to the theatre, under the shade of an avenue of lime trees, and on the open space before the entrance the expectant audience await the call of the trumpets to summon them to their places. These "trumpet-calls" consist of the principal "motivs" from the music of the act which is to follow, and are sounded three times, each side of the portico. Immediately after the last, the audience must be seated, the doors are closed, the lights are turned down, and a solemn hush pervades the entire building until the first strain of the music is heard, when all become absorbed in the wonderful drama.

To attempt an analysis of the great Norse epic (for Wagner has worked out his poem more from the Scandinavian than from Teutonic sources) is a task too difficult to attempt here, as also is any critical account of the music or singers. But, as a correspondent of one of the London newspapers writes: "It is not the music alone, it is not the 'mise-en-scène,' it is not the artists; but it is the manner in which these elements are welded together and made to serve each other's ends. Therein, assuredly, lies the secret of Bayreuth. . . . The visible beauties of the representations, notwithstanding, I cannot bring myself to the utterance of any praises that shall forestall those that belong of right to Hans Richter and his orchestra. Such playing might well have stolen away the soul of one to whom the principles of 'endless melody' and the 'leit-motiv' were as things poisonous and forbidden. At one moment sweeping along like the blast of a coming whirlwind, at the next hushed to sleep like a tired child, the music rose and fell under the magic hand of Hans Richter. Its meaning was clear, its expression was faultless, and its colour was superb!

"There are people who say that Wagner's music often means mere deafening noise. Let them go to Bayreuth. There are those who will have it that the human voice has no chance when pitted against the tremendous instrumental array called for by such a work as the 'Ring.' Let them go to Bayreuth. There are those who deny the possibility of securing a perfect balance of tone throughout the complicated pages of one of Wagner's latest scores. I say, once more, Let them go to Bayreuth!" A. J. H.

Obituary.

By the death of Mr. William Hunting, the Church at Evesham has lost a member nearly the whole of whose life was spent in that town, and one widely known, especially among the older Sunday School teachers of this district. From early manhood Mr. Hunting was closely connected with the Oat Street Chapel. For 26 years he was Secretary to the congregation, and among the most ready and constant workers in everything connected with its affairs. It is 33 years since Mr. Hunting began to teach in the Sunday School, and 21 years since he first undertook the office of Superintendent. His help is remembered with gratitude by parents and grandparents of children now attending the School. During the last few years of his life, Mr. Hunting was unable to undertake the duties of the offices he had so long performed, but failing health did not diminish his interest in Chapel or School. He died in his 54th year, leaving a widow and two children, with whom deep sympathy is widely felt.

God's Gifts.

God gave a gift to Earth—a child,
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

It lay so helpless, so forlorn,
Earth took it coldly and in scorn,
Cursing the day when it was born.

She gave it first a tarnished name—
For heritage, a tainted fame—
Then cradled it in want and shame.

All influence of Good or Right,
All ray of God's most holy light,
She curtain'd closely from its sight.

Then turned her heart, her eyes away,
Ready to look again, the day
Its little feet began to stray.

In dens of guilt the baby played,
Where sin, and sin alone, was made—
The law that all around obeyed.

With ready and obedient care,
He learnt the tasks they taught him there,
Black sin for lesson, oaths for prayer.

Then Earth arose, and, in her might,
To vindicate her injured right,
Thrust him in deeper depths of night—

Branding him with a deeper brand
Of shame, he could not understand—
The felon outcast of the land.

God gave a gift to Earth—a child,
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Open'd its ignorant eyes and smiled.

And Earth received the gift, and cried
Her joy and triumph, far and wide,
Till echo answered to her pride.

She blest the hour, when first he came
To take the crown of pride and fame,
Wreathed through long ages for his name.

Then bent her utmost art and skill,
To train the supple mind and will,
And guard it from a breath of ill.

She strew'd his morning path with flowers;
And love, in tender drooping showers,
Nourished the blue and dawning hours.

She shed, in rainbow hues of light,
A halo round the Good and Right,
To tempt and charm the baby's sight;

And every step of work or play,
Was lit by some such dazzling ray,
Till morning brightened into day.

And then the World arose, and said,—
"Let added honours now be shed
On such a noble heart and head!"

Oh! World, both gifts were pure and bright,
Holy and sacred in God's sight,
Them God will judge, and *thee* aright.

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

"Sir George Tressady."

[BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD.]

It is the fashion to regard Mrs. Ward's novels as too moral. The *Saturday Review* talks of her district visiting characters with horror, and artists object to her novels because they have a purpose.

It is true that there is a constant seriousness about both the style and the temper of Mrs. Ward's books which at times become oppressive. In none of her later books has she shown the same lightness of touch, the same humour and variety that she did in "Robert Elsmere." There, just now and then, we live in a world which is not saddened by the thought of pain or death. One might apply to Mrs. Ward the words of Catherine soon after her baby was born: "Robert, I cannot put it out of my head. I cannot forget it, the pain of the world." That seems to me to express the prevailing tone of Mrs. Ward's books. We must not expect, therefore, much light-heartedness and gaiety in her writings; to quarrel with them because it is not there is to ignore the law that every writer has the defect of his qualities. It is surely good to have one writer who does take life even a little too seriously, and whose every page is haunted by "the still, sad music of humanity.' It is easy to laugh at Marcella and Marcella's creator in this novel of "Sir George Tressady" for the attempt to unite the parts of great lady of society and district visitor; and yet one of the hopes of future reform lies in the rich being increasingly possessed by a sense of the misery of the poor and their responsibility for it. There is probably nothing more difficult than to unite the functions of rich, titled aristocrat and social reformer. No position is more likely to lead to inconsistency or to offer openings for sarcastic criticism. I do not say that Mrs. Ward has succeeded entirely in the character of Marcella

Manwell; but the attempt was worth making, and at any rate there is no other writer who has succeeded so well. Marcella, in the earlier novel of that name, has points of resemblance with George Meredith's "Beauchamp." She is a social reformer, and nothing else; she forgets, as social reformers are apt to do, what Mrs. Ward calls "that teasing duty to our equals on which only the wisest preachers have ever laid sufficient stress." Home, lover, friends are neglected. But the Marcella of "Sir George Tressady" feels the necessity of doing her duty to equals as well as inferiors. I venture to say that Mrs. Ward succeeds better in describing the character of one who unites the *role* of devoted wife and mother and friend with that of an enthusiastic reformer than any previous novelist.

We naturally ask ourselves about any of Mrs. Ward's books, what is the controlling idea of it? In the novel "Marcella," we had the picture of a woman slowly changed by love and sorrow from head-long, wild enthusiasm, to a steady, glowing indignation against injustice, based on and strengthened by an intense home love. One of the pleasures of this new story is to watch that glowing indignation and that intense home love at work. But the leading character in the new story is not Marcella, but Sir George Tressady, and the main interest lies in his conversion from a clever, ambitious, pessimistic dilettanteism to sympathetic enthusiasm and recognition of responsibility to humanity. He is a very interesting and not uncommon type of character. "He was now a man full of odds and ends of ideas, of nascent interests, curiosities and opinions, strongly influenced, moreover, already by the vision of political distinction." "There are two things that protect men of his stamp from their own lack of moral stamina, perpetual change of scene that turns the world into a spectacle, and love." He is haunted as many modern artistic minds are haunted, not by the misery of others but by fear of personal pain. "Well? and do you ever think that something like that has yet to happen to all of us—something hideous—some torture—something that will make us wish we had never been born? Darling, am I a mad sort of fool? Stop here—in the shade—give me a kiss." There is something in that to remind us of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," with its cry, "O, love, let us be true to one another," but it is even more melancholy, more hopeless. He has no sympathy with general suffering although so much alive to the possibilities of his own. "It is no good, the world can't be run by pity. At least living always seems to me a great, brutal, rushing, rough-and-tumble business which has to be carried on whether we like it or not. To be too careful, too gingerly, over the separate life brings it all to a standstill." And, in another place, Mrs. Ward says of him, "Out of a kind of good taste he had wished to take life lightly, with no great emotion." These sentences draw with great skill and subtlety a character which we can all realize. This man marries a frivolous, small-minded, unsympathetic woman. The interest of the story turns upon the effect of his miserable marriage, and of his growing fascination for Marcella, who belongs to the opposite political party. His love for Marcella has in it something of the high, chivalrous devotion of Dante for Beatrice: it awakens his dormant sympathies for others, so that with a "veiled passion that told upon the House," in his last speech in Parliament, he refers to "those dim, toiling thousands whose lot, as it comes to work upon the mind, is daily perplexing, if not transforming, the thoughts and ideals of such men as I." Now in this Mrs. Ward came dangerously near making Tressady ludicrous. Wives, even the most frivolous or unsympathetic, don't like their husbands being converted in this way by the angelic influence of another woman; they resent it strongly, and they seriously doubt the reality of the conversion: we are inclined to sympathise and agree with them. Nevertheless, Mrs. Ward makes us feel in Tressady's case that the conversion is genuine, and that after the moral fight and suffering through which he passes, he is a nobler, more earnest, man than he was before. In "David Grieve," and in "Sir George Tressady," Mrs. Ward has described, with great delicacy and power, growing love and peace between a husband and wife who were at first hopelessly incompatible. In both cases death cut short the process. We wish that in another novel she would solve the problem by less drastic methods, and that she would make the wife, and not the husband, for once, the superior character.—H. Gow.

Sunday School Lessons.

By DAVID MACRAE.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

"He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."—*Coleridge.*

1. *Does God remember the birds and the beasts?* Yes; "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."—Psa. cxlvii. 9.

2. *What is said in the* 104*th Psalm?* "He sendeth the springs . . . *which* run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches."—Psa. civ. 10-13.

3. *What is said about the grass?* "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle."—Psa. civ. 14.

4. *What is said about places for the birds' nests?* "The trees of the Lord are full of sap; trees which he hath planted, where the birds make their nests; as for the stork, the fir trees are her house."—Psa. civ. 16, 17.

5. *What did Jesus say about God's care for the birds?*—"Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."—Matt. vi. 26.

6. *What does he say about the little sparrow?* "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing; and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."—Matt. x. 29.

7. *Will a good man be cruel to his dumb companion?* No; "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."—Prov. xii. 10.

8. *What did Jacob say about the flocks?* He said, "The flocks and herds with young are with with me; and if men should overdrive them one day all the flock will die. I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me . . . be able to endure."—Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14.

9. *What did Rebekah do after she had given a drink of water to Abraham's servant?* "When she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for the camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels."—Gen. xxiv. 19, 20.

10. *Was the Sabbath rest to be for man only?* No; it was to be also for the dumb creatures that work for him.

11. *Repeat what is said in Exodus* xxiii. 12. "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest." See also Exod. xx. 9, 10.

12. *What is said about not muzzling the ox?* "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn."—Deut. xxv. 4.

13. *Were people to be kind only to the animals that belonged to themselves?* No; they were to be kind also to those that belonged to others.

14. *What do we read in the* 22*nd chapter of Deuteronomy?* "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother *be* not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not; then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass."—Deut. xxii. 1-3.

15. *And what is said about a neighbour's beast that has fallen down?* "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift *them* up again."—Deut. xxii. 4.

16. *And what about birds' nests?* "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be* young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; *but* thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and *that* thou mayest prolong *thy* days."—Deut. xxii. 6, 7.

17. *What is said in Psalm* 37*th about the righteous?* "The righteous sheweth mercy." Psa. xxxvii. 21.

18. *What did Dr. Doddridge once say about a man's religion and his kindness to animals?* He said, "I would not give much for the religion of a man whose very dog is not the better of it."

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Miss Fret and Miss Laugh.

Cries little Miss Fret,
In a very great pet:
"I hate this warm weather, it's horrid to tan.
It scorches my nose,
And it blisters my toes,
And wherever I go I must carry a fan."

Chirps little Miss Laugh:
"Why, I couldn't tell half
The fun I am having this bright summer day.
I sing through the hours,
And cull pretty flowers,
And ride like a queen in the sweet-smelling hay."

Margaret E. Sangster.

The History of Tip-Top.

By Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.

I.—HOW THE NEST WAS BUILT.

Under the window of a certain pretty cottage there grew a great old apple tree which, in spring, had thousands and thousands of lovely pink blossoms on it, and in autumn about half as many bright red apples as it had blossoms in the spring. The nursery of this cottage was a little bower of a room, papered with moss green paper, and hung with white muslin curtains. And here five little children used to come in their white night-gowns to be dressed and have their hair curled every morning. First, there was Alice and Mary, bright-eyed, laughing little girls, of seven and eight years; and then came stout little Jamie and Charlie; and lastly, little Puss. Her real name was Ellen, but she was also called Puss, and Birdie, and any other pet name that came to mind. Now it used to happen, every morning, that the five little heads would be peeping out of the window together, into the boughs of the apple tree, where bright flowers grew. And the reason was this. A pair of robins had built a very pretty smooth-lined nest in a fork of the branch which came just under the window. And the building of this nest had been watched, day by day, by the five pair of bright eyes of these five children. The robins at first had been rather shy of this, but as they got to know the children better, they seemed to think no more of the little curly heads in the window than of the pink blossoms about them, or of the daisies and buttercups at the foot of the tree. All the little hands came forward to help. Some threw out flossy bits of cotton, for which, we grieve to say, Charlie cut a hole in the crib quilt, and some threw out bits of thread and yarn. Alice tore up a large piece from one of her garters, which she tossed out to the robins, and they all delighted in seeing the skill with which the little builders wove it all in. "Little birds, little birds," they would say, "you shall be kept warm, for we have given you cotton out of our quilt, and yarn out of our stockings." Nay, so kind were the children, that Charlie cut a glossy, golden curl from Pussy's head, and threw it out. And when the birds caught it up, the whole lot laughed to see Pussy's golden hair being used for a bird's-nest. When the little thing was finished, it was so neat and trim and workmanlike, that the children all clapped their hands and called it "Our nest," and the two robins they called "Our birds." But wonderful was the joy when the little eyes, peeping out one morning, saw in the nest a beautiful speckled egg. And the joy grew from day to day, for every morning there came another egg, and so on till there were five little eggs, and then the eldest girl, Alice, said, "There are five eggs, that makes one for each of us, and each of us will have a bird by-and-by." At which all the children laughed and jumped for glee. But, of course, the children never meant to touch the eggs and the little birds: they were to be left in the nest with their father and mother.

(*To be continued.*)

Saved by a Spaniel.

More than three hundred years ago the famous "William the Silent," Prince of Orange, so named because he spoke so seldom, was called to defend his country from the Spaniards, who wished to conquer Holland and to change its religion. One dark night, when the armies were within a short distance of each other, the invading host tried to surprise the Dutch camp. In the darkness a small party of them stole quietly along, and passed the Dutch sentries, who, tired out by the previous day's fighting, had sunk down to rest. In the tent of William all was still, but a little spaniel, who lay at the prince's feet, slept with one ear open. Presently the dog raised his head and growled, for he heard something stirring outside, and felt himself in duty bound to speak out. When the noise grew louder and drew nearer, he jumped up and began to whine and bark; but the worn-out prince did not wake. What could the doggie do more? In a great state of excitement he went close to the slumberer's face, licked it, and by barking his loudest, at length roused him. William at once guessed that something was wrong. He sprang up hastily and mounted his horse, who always stood ready saddled by his tent, and unseen by the Spaniards, through the thick gloom galloped safely away. To show his gratitude towards the faithful spaniel, who had saved his life by a timely warning, William the Silent ever afterwards kept one of his race as a personal attendant, and when at last he slept to wake no more on earth, the marble figure of his small protector was carved upon his tomb in the church in Holland which holds his remains.

The Critical Hearer.

The critical hearer knows, more than any other man in the congregation, what good preaching is. At least, he says he does, and who would dare to doubt it? Many a great preacher he has heard—such as R. W. Dale—and once a renowned bishop. Yet, after all—this is his honest opinion—not one of them ever came up to his bright ideal of what a preacher should be. Strange as it may seem, not one was absolutely faultless. One spoke too loud and one too low; one was too plain and one too flowery; one made such awkward gestures and one made none at all. "I am not hard to please," he says, "and I wonder how great a reputation many gain on a small amount of capital."

Our critical hearer aims to be the Sir Oracle of the congregation. He wears an air of gravity slightly touched by self-conceit. Some accept his strongly-uttered opinions without a murmur; but others question them, and intimate that he is "only a fault-finder." A man who claims to be infallibly right in his opinion of a preacher's merits is sure to find some people to differ from him.

We must say something in favour of the critical hearer.

Since he has the critical faculty, he has the same right to use it that another man has to use his memory or his imagination. It is his duty to use it under certain conditions. The world needs critics to run down quacks and pretenders of all kinds, as hunters run down pernicious foxes. Humbug must be exposed, nonsense stripped of the stately rhetoric which often imposes upon the public, and the difference between sham and sense made clear. The Church needs critics, else where could we gather editors and General Conference delegates, whose mission it is to reform church government? Until the world is perfect we must let the critics live.

Your hand, then, faithful critic! You and the preacher are not enemies, but friends. You are a blessing to him, though sometimes in disguise; and if you make him wince, you ought to make him wiser. Use the critical faculty—who dares forbid?

Only, friend, when you hear a sermon, consider this: the truth is more than he who tells it. Be in sympathy with the truth, and the graces of the orator will be a secondary matter. Are you thirsty? Then the water from the well of salvation will be pleasant, even though the moss-covered bucket looks somewhat homely. What of that? Drink and be thankful, though you do not get the water in the golden goblet. Golden goblets are rather scarce, and you may die of thirst before you get one. There is many a plain-spoken man who, from a warm heart, can tell you of the great deep things of Eternal Love and Goodness. Hear him for his cause, not for his merits, and be a better man. Strange as it may seem to you, O critic, feeble tongues sometimes win more souls to the truth than golden mouths. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Consider this: that the style of speaking which you are pleased to censure is the style which produces most effect upon many other hearers. You do not fancy Boanerges, and cry, with impatience, "What is the use of so much noise?" It is of no use to you, but it is to many others, for it keeps them wakeful and attentive. They believe that a gospel of sound is a sound gospel, and they respect the "son of thunder" who proclaims it. You do not fancy Barnabas; but there is many an aching heart who thanks God for the sermon from this "son of consolation." It was indeed balm for the wounded spirit. You do not fancy Paul, for he is dry, doctrinal, and logical; but many educated people are drawn to the truth by his irresistible reasoning. You do not fancy Apollos, who, with his royal imagination, bears the congregation up to the seventh heaven of fancy until they know not whether they are "in the body or out of the body" that they are very happy. You would not cross the street to hear such a man, but fifteen hundred people go a great way further.

Remember, therefore, friendly critics, these two things:—

First.—The style of preaching which you censure may be the very style which, by God's blessing, wins and saves a multitude.

Second.—Great orators, like great poets, are always scarce, and always will be. To blame preachers because they are not first-rate orators, is to blame the wisdom of Him who calls men of average abilities for the holiest of callings. "He censures God," says Edmund Burke, "who quarrels with the imperfections of man."